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THE GOLD BUG. THE GREAT PRIZE TALE.

BY EDGAR A. POE, ESQ.

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What is it? what is it? this fellow is dancing mad! He has been bitten by the Tarantula.

(All in the wrong.)

Many years ago I contracted an intimacy with a Mr. William Legrand. He was of an ancient Huguenot family, and had once been wealthy; but a series of misfortunes had reduced him to want.

To avoid the mortification consequent upon his disaster, he left New Orleans, the city of his forefathers, and took up his residence at Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, South Carolina.

This island is a very singular one. It consists of little else than the sea sand, and is about three miles long. Its breadth at no point exceeds a quarter of a mile. It is separated from the main land by a scarcely perceptible creek, owing its way through a wilderness of reeds and sedge, a favorite resort of the marsh-hen. The vegetation, as might be supposed, is scant, or at least dwarfish. No trees of any magnitude are to be seen. Near the western extremity, where Fort Moultrie stands, and where there are some miserable frame buildings, tenanted, during summer, by the fugitives from Charleston dust and fever, may be found indeed, the bristly palmetto; but the whole island, with the exception of this western point and a line of hard white beach on the sea-coast, is covered with a dense undergrowth of the sweet myrtle so much prized by the horticulturists of England. The shrub here often attains the height of fifteen or twenty feet, and forms an almost impenetrable copse, burdening the air with its fragrance.

In the inner recesses of this copse, not far from the eastern or more remote end of the island, Legrand had built himself a small hut, which he occupied when I first, by mere accident, made his acquaintance. This soon ripened into friendship—for there was much in the recluse to excite interest and esteem. I found him well educated, with unusual powers of mind, but affected with misanthropy, and subject to perverse moods of alternative enthusiasm and melancholy. He had with him many books, but rarely employed them. His chief amusements were gunning and fishing, or sauntering along the bank and through the myrtles, in quest of shells or entomological specimens—his collection of the latter might have been envied by the Swammerdam.

In these excursions he was usually accompanied by an old negro, called Jupiter, who had been manumitted before the reverse of the family, but who could be induced, neither by threats or promises, to abandon what he considered his right of attendance upon the footsteps of his young master. It is not improbable that the relatives of Legrand, conceiving him to be somewhat unsettled in intellect, had contrived to instill this obnoxious idea into Jupiter, with a view to the supervision and guardianship of the wanderer.

The winters in the latitude of Sullivan's Island are seldom very severe, and in the fall of the year, it is a rare event indeed when a life is considered necessary. About the middle of October, 18—, there occurred, however, a day of remarkable chilliness. Just before sunset I started on my way through the copse, and not visited for several weeks—my residence being, at that time, in Charleston, a distance of nine miles from the island, while the facilities of passage and passage were very far behind those of the present day. Upon reaching the hut I rapped, as was my custom, and, getting no reply, sought for the key where I knew it was secreted, unlocked the door and went in. A fire fire was blazing upon the hearth. It was a novelty and by no means an unwelcome one. I threw off an overcoat, took an arm-chair by the crackling logs, and waited patiently the arrival of my hosts.

Soon after dark they arrived and gave me a cordial welcome. Jupiter grinning from ear to ear, bustled about to prepare some marsh-mallows for supper. Legrand was in one of his fits—how else shall I term them?—of enthusiasm. He had found an unknown bivalve, forming a new genus, and, more than this, he had hunted down and secured, with Jupiter's assistance, a *scarabeus* which he believed to be totally new, but in respect to which he wished to have my opinion on the morrow.

"And why not to-night?" I asked, rubbing my hands over the blaze and wishing the whole tribe of *scarabaei* at the devil.

"Ah, if I had only known that you were here!" said Legrand, "but it is so long since I have seen you; and how could I foresee that you would pay me a visit this very night of all others? As I was coming home I met Lieutenant G—, from the fort, and, very foolishly, I lent him the bug; so it will be impossible for you to see it until the morning. Stay here to-night, and I will send you down for it at sunrise. It is the loveliest thing in creation!"

"What?—a scarab?"

"Nonsense! no!—the bug. It is of a brilliant gold color—about the size of a large hickory-nut—with two jet black spots near one extremity of the back, and another, somewhat longer, at the other. The antennae are—"

"They ain't no tin in him, Massa Will. I keeps a tellin on you, here interrupted Jupiter, "de bug is a goole bug, solid, ebbery bit of him, inside and all, sep him wing—neber feel half so hebbly a bug in my life."

"Well, suppose it is, Jup," replied Legrand, somewhat more earnestly, it seemed to me, than the occasion demanded, "is that any reason for your letting the birds burn? The color—here he turned to me—is really almost enough to warrant Jupiter's idea. You never saw a more brilliant metallic luster than the scales emit—but of this you cannot judge till to-morrow. In the meantime I can give you some idea of the shape. Saying this he seated himself at a small table, upon which were a pen and ink, but no paper. He looked for some in a drawer, but found none.

"Never mind," said he at length, "this will answer," and he drew from his waist coat pocket a scrap of what I took to be a very dirty foolscap, and made upon it a rough drawing with the pen. While he did this I retained my seat by the fire, for I was still chilly. When the design was complete he handed it to me without rising. As I received it a loud growl was heard, succeeded by a scratching at the door. Jupiter opened it, and a large Newfoundland, belonging to Legrand, rushed in, leaped upon my shoulders, and loaded me with caresses, for I had shown him much attention during previous visits. When his gambols were over I looked at the paper, and to speak the truth, found myself not a little puzzled at what my friend had depicted.

"Well," I said, after contemplating it for some minutes, "this is a strange *scarabeus*, I must confess: new to me; never saw anything like it before—unless it were a skull, or a death's-head—which it more nearly resembles than anything else that has come under my observation."

"A death's-head?" echoed Legrand—"Oh—yes, well, it has something of that appearance on paper, no doubt. The two upper black spots look like eyes, eh? and the longer one at the bottom like a mouth—and then the shape of the whole is oval."

"Perhaps so," said I; "but, Legrand, I fear you are no artist. I must wait until I see the beetle itself, if I am to form any idea of its personal appearance."

"Well, I don't know," said he, a little nettled, "I draw tolerably—should do it at least—have had good masters, and flatter myself that I am not quite a blockhead."

"But my dear fellow, you are joking, then," said I; "this is a very passable skull—indeed, I may say that it is a very excellent skull, according to the vulgar notions about such specimens of physiology—and your *scarabeus* must be the queerest *scarabeus* in the world if it resembles it. Why, we may get up a very thrilling bit of superstition upon this hint. I presume you will call the bug *scarabeus caput hominis* or something of that kind—there are many similar titles in the Natural Histories. But where are the antennae you spoke of?"

"The antennae!" said Legrand, who seemed to be getting unaccountably warm upon the subject; "I am sure you must see the antennae. I made them as distinct as they are in the original insect, and I presume that is sufficient."

"Well, well," I said, "perhaps you have—still I don't see them; and I handed him the paper without additional remark, not wishing to ruffle his temper; but I was much surprised at the turn affairs had taken; his ill humor puzzled me—and, as for the drawing of the beetle, there were positively no antennae visible, and the whole did bear a very close resemblance to the ordinary cuts of a death's head."

He received the paper very peevishly, and was about to crumple it, apparently to throw it in the fire, when a casual glance at the design seemed suddenly to rivet his attention; in an instant his face grew violently red—in another as excessively pale. For some minutes he continued to scrutinize the drawing minutely where he sat. At length he arose, took a candle from the table, and proceeded to seat himself upon a sea-chest in the further corner of the room. Here again he made an anxious examination of the paper; turning it in all directions. He said nothing, however, and his conduct greatly astonished me; yet I thought it prudent not to exacerbate the growing moodiness of his temper by any comment. Presently he took from his coat-pocket a wallet, placed the paper carefully in it, and deposited both in a writing desk, which he locked. He now grew more composed in his demeanor, but his original air of enthusiasm had quite disappeared. Yet he seemed not so much sulky as abstracted. As the evening wore away he became more and more absorbed in reverie, from which no sallies of mine could arouse him. As I had my intention to pass the night at the hut, as I had frequently done before, but, seeing my host in this mood, I deemed it proper to take leave. He did not press me to remain, but, as I departed, he shook my hand with even more than his usual cordiality.

It was about a month after this (and during the interval I had seen nothing of Legrand) when I received a visit, at Charleston, from his man Jupiter. I had never seen the good old negro so dispirited, and I feared that some serious disaster had befallen my friend.

"Well, Jup," said I, "what is the matter now? how is your master?"

"Why, to speak de troof, massa, him not so well as might be."

"Not well? I am truly sorry to hear it. What does he complain of?"

"Darl dat it!—him neber plain ob notin—but him berry sick for all dat!"

"Very sick, Jupiter—why didn't you say so at once? Is he confined to bed?"

"No, dat he aint!—he aint find nowhar—dat's just whar de shoe pinch—my mind has got to be berry hebbly bout poor Massa Will."

"Jupiter, I should like to understand what it is you are talking about. You say your master is sick. Hasn't he told you what ails him?"

"Why, massa, taint worf while to git mad bout de matter—Massa Will say noffin at all aint de matter wid him—but den what makes him go bout looking dis here way, wid de head down and de soldiers up and as white as a goose? And den he keeps a syphon all de time—"

"Keeps a what, Jupiter?"

"Keeps a syphon wid de figgers on de slate—de queerest figgers I eber did see. Ise gittin to be skeered, I tell you. Hab to keep a mighty tight eye on him noo-overs. Tolder day he gib me de slip fore de suns up, and was gone de whole ob de blessed day. I had a big stick ready to gib him a d—l good beatin when he did come—but Ise sich a fool dat I hadn't de heart arter all—he look so berry poorly."

"Eh?—what?—ah yes!—upon the whole I think you had better not be too severe with the poor fellow—don't fog him, Jupiter—he can't very well stand it—but can you form no idea of what has occasioned this illness, or rather this change of conduct? Has anything unpleasant happened since I saw you?"

"No, massa, dey aint him noffin unpleasant since den—twas fore den, I'm leaved—twas de berry day you was dare."

"How? What do you mean?"

"Why, massa, I mean de bug—dare now."

"The what?"

"De bug—I'm berry sartan dat Massa Will bin bit somewhere bout de head by dat d—n goole bug."

"And what cause have you, Jupiter, for such a supposition?"

"Claws enuff, massa, and mouff too. I neber did see such a d—n bug—he kick and he bite ebbery ting what cum near him. Massa Will cotch him fust, but had for to let him go him mighty quick, I tell you—den was de time he must ha got de bite. I didn't like de look ob de bug mouff, myself, no how, so I wouldn't take hold ob him wid my finger, but cotch him wid a piece of paper dat I found. I rap him up in de paper and stuff piece ob it in de mouff—dat was de way."

"And you think, then, that your master was really bitten by the beetle, and that the bite made him sick?"

"I don't tink noffin bout it—I nose it. What make him dream bout de goole so much, if taint cause he bit by de goole bug? Ise heard bout dem gools bugs fore dis."

"But how do you know he dreams about gold?"

"How I know?—why cause he talk bout it in de sleep—dat's how I nose."

"Well, Jup, perhaps you are right; but to what fortunate circumstance am I to attribute the honor of a visit from you to-day?"

"What de matter, massa?"

"Did you bring any message from Mr. Legrand?"

"No, massa, I bring dis here pissel; and here Jupiter handed me a note which ran thus:

MY DEAR—

Why have I not seen you for so long a time? I hope you have not been so foolish as to take offence at any little brusquerie of mine; but no, that is improbable.

Since I saw you I have had great cause for anxiety. I have something to tell you, yet how scarcely know to tell it, or whether I should tell it at all. I have not been quite well for some days past, and poor old Jup annoys me almost beyond endurance, by his well meant attentions. Would you believe it?—he had prepared a huge stick, the other day, with which to chastise me for giving him the slip, and spending the day, *solus*, among the hills on the main land. I verily believe that my ill looks alone saved me a flogging.

I have made no addition to my cabinet since we met.

If you can, in any way, make it convenient, come over with Jupiter. Do come. I wish to see you to-night, upon business of importance. I assure you that it is of the highest importance.

Ever yours, Wm. LEGRAND.

There was something in the tone of this note which gave me great uneasiness. Its whole style differed materially from that of Legrand. What could he be dreaming of? What new project possessed his exalted brain? What business of the highest importance could he possibly have to transact? Jupiter's account of him boded no good. I dreaded lest the continued pressure of misfortune had, at length, fairly unsettled the reason of my friend. Without a moment's hesitation, therefore, I prepared to accompany the negro.

Upon reaching the wharf, I noticed a scythe and three spades, all apparently new, lying in the bottom of the boat in which we were to embark.

"What is the meaning of all this, Jup?" I inquired.

"Him syfe, massa, and spade."

"Very true, but what are they doing here?"

"Him de syfe and de spade which Massa Will sia pon my buyin for him in de town, and de debbles own lot ob money I had to gib for em."

"But what, in the name of all that is mysterious, is your 'Massa Will' going to do with sythes and spades?"

"Dat's more dan I know, and de debbles take me if I don't believe 'tis more dan he know, too. But its all come ob de bug."

Finding that no satisfaction was to be obtained of Jupiter, whose whole intellect seemed to be absorbed by 'de bug,' I now stepped into the boat and made sail.

With a fair and strong breeze we soon ran into the little cove to the northward of Fort Moultrie, and a walk of some two miles brought us to the hut. It was about three in the afternoon when we arrived. Legrand had been awaiting us in eager expectation. He grasped my hand with a nervous *empressment* which alarmed me and strengthened the suspicions already entertained. His countenance was pale, even to ghastliness, and his deep-set eyes glared with unnatural luster. After some inquiries respecting his health, I asked him, not knowing what better to say, if he had yet obtained the *scarabeus* from Lieut. G—.

"Oh, yes," he replied, coloring violently, "I got it from him the next morning. Nothing should tempt me to part with that *scarabeus*. Do you know that Jupiter is quite right about it?"

"In what way?" I asked, with a sad foreboding at heart.

"In supposing it to be a bug of real gold." He said this with an air of profound seriousness, and I felt inexpressibly shocked.

"This bug is to make my fortune," he continued with a triumphant smile, "to re-instate me in my family possessions. Is it any wonder, then, that I prize it? Since Fortune has thought fit to bestow it upon me, I have only to use it properly and I shall arrive at the gold of which it is the index. Jupiter, bring me that *scarabeus*!"

"What! de bug, massa? I'd rudder not go for to trouble dat bug—you must git him for your own self. Hereupon Legrand arose, with a grave and stately air, and brought me the beetle from a glass case in which it was inclosed. It was a beautiful *scarabeus*, and, at that time, unknown to naturalists—of course a great prize in a scientific point of view. There were two round black spots near one extremity of the back, and a longer one near the other. The scales were exceedingly hard and glossy, with all the appearance of burnished gold. The weight of the insect was very remarkable, and, taking all things into consideration, I could hardly blame Jupiter for his opinion respecting it; but what to make of Legrand's concordance with that opinion, I could not, for the life of me, tell.

"I sent for you," said he, in a grandiloquent tone, when I had completed my examination of the beetle, "I sent for you that I might have your counsel and assistance in furthering the views of Fate and the bug."

"My dear Legrand," I cried, interrupting him, "you are certainly unwell, and had better use some little precautions. You shall go to bed, and I will remain with you a few days, until you get over this. You are feverish and—"

"Feel my pulse," said he.

I felt it, and, to say the truth, found not the slightest indication of fever.

"But you may be ill and yet have no fever. Allow me, this once, to prescribe for you. In the first place, go to bed. In the next—"

"You are mistaken," he interposed, "I am as well as I can expect to be under the excitement which I suffer. If you really wish me well you will relieve this excitement."

"And how is this to be done?"

"Very easily. Jupiter and myself are going upon an expedition into the hills upon the main land, and, in such expedition, we shall need the aid of some person in whom we can confide. You are the only person we can trust. Whether we succeed or fail, the excitement which you now perceive in me will be equally allayed."

"I am anxious to oblige you in any way," I replied; "but do you mean to say that this infernal beetle has any connection with your expedition into the hills?"

"It has."

"Then, Legrand, I can become a party to no such absurd proceedings."

"I am sorry—very sorry—for we shall have to try it by ourselves."

"Try it by yourselves? The man is surely mad!—but stay!—how long do you propose to be absent?"

"Probably all night. We shall start immediately, and be back, at all events, by sunrise."

"And you promise me, upon your honor, that when this freak of yours is over, and the bug business (good God!) settled to your satisfaction, you will then return home and follow my advice implicitly, as that of your physician?"

"Yes, I promise; and now let us be off, for we have no time to lose."

With a heavy heart I accompanied my friend. We started about four o'clock—Legrand, Jupiter, the dog, and myself. Jupiter had with him the scythe and spades—the whole of which he insisted upon carrying—more through fear, it seemed to me, of trusting either of the implements within reach of his master, than from any excess of industry or complaisance. His demeanor was dogged in the extreme, and 'dat d—n bug' were the sole words which escaped his lips during the journey. For my own part, I had charge of a couple of dark lanterns, while Legrand contented himself with the *scarabeus*, which he carried attached to the end of a whip-cord, twirling it to and fro, with the air of conjurer, as he went. When I observed this plain evidence of my friend's aberration, I could scarcely refrain from tears. I thought it best, however, to humor his fancy, at least for the present, or until I could adopt some more energetic measures with a chance of success. In the meantime I had endeavored, but all in vain, in regard to the object of the expedition. Having succeeded in inducing me to accompany him, he seemed unwilling to hold conversation upon any topic of minor importance, and

to all my questions he vouchsafed no other reply than "we shall see."

We crossed the creek at the head of the island by means of a skiff, and, ascending the high grounds on the shore of the main land, we proceeded, in a north-westerly direction, through a tract of country excessively wild and desolate, where no trace of human footsteps was to be seen. Legrand led the way with decision, pausing only for an instant, here and there, to consult what appeared to be certain landmarks of his own contrivance upon a former occasion.

In this manner we journeyed for about two hours, and the sun was just setting when we entered a region infinitely more dreary than any yet seen. It was a species of table land, near the summit of an almost inaccessible hill, densely wooded from base to pinnacle, and interspersed with huge crags that appeared to be loosely upon the soil, and, in many cases, were prevented from precipitating themselves into the valleys below merely by the support of the trees against which they reclined. Deep ravines, in various directions, gave an air of still sterner solemnity to the scene.

The natural platform to which we had clambered was thickly overgrown with brambles, through which we soon discovered that it would have been impossible to force our way but for the scythe; and Jupiter, by direction of his master, proceeded to clear for us a path to the foot of an enormously tall tulip tree, which stood, with some eight or ten oaks, upon the level, and far surpassed them all, and all other trees which I had then ever seen, in the beauty of its foliage and form, in the wide spread of its branches, and in the general majesty of its appearance. When we reached this tree Legrand turned to Jupiter and asked him if he thought he could climb it. The old man seemed a little staggered by the question, and for some moments made no reply. At length he approached the tree, walked slowly round its huge trunk, and examined it with minute attention. When he had completed his scrutiny he merely said:

"Yes, massa, Jup climb any tree he ebber see in his life."

"Then up with you as soon as possible, for it will soon be too dark to see what we are about."

"How far mus' go up, massa?" inquired Jupiter.

"Get up the main trunk first, and then I will tell you which way to go—and here—stop!—take this beetle up with you."

"De bug, Massa Will!—de goole bug!" cried the negro, drawing back in dismay—"what for mus' tote de bug way up de tree?—an if I do?"

"If you are afraid, Jup, a great big negro like you, to take hold of a harmless little dead beetle, why you can carry it up by this string, but if you do not take it up with you in some way I shall be under the necessity of breaking your head with this shovel."

"What de matter, now, massa?" said Jup, evidently shamed into compliance; "always want to raise a fuss wid old nigger. Was only funnin' anyhow. Je feared de bug! what I fear for de bug? Here he took cautious hold of the extreme end of the string, and maintaining the insect as far from his person as circumstances would permit, prepared to ascend the tree."

In youth the tulip tree, or *Liriodendron Tulipifera*, the most magnificent of American foresters, has a trunk peculiarly smooth, and often rises to a great height without lateral branches, but in its ripener age the bark becomes gnarled and uneven, while many short limbs make their appearance on the stem. Thus the difficulty of ascension in the present case lay more in semblance than in reality. Embracing the huge cylinder as closely as possible with his arms and knees, he seized with his hands some projections, and resting his naked toes upon others, Jupiter after one or two narrow escapes from falling, at length wriggled himself into the first great fork, and seemed to consider the whole business as virtually accomplished. The risk of the achievement was in fact now over, although the climber was some sixty or seventy feet from the ground.

"Which way mus' go now, Massa Will?" he asked.

"Keep up the largest branch—the one on this side," said Legrand. The negro obeyed him promptly, and apparently with but little trouble; ascending higher and higher, until no glimpse of his squat figure could be obtained through the dense foliage which enveloped it. Presently his voice was heard in a sort of halloo.

"How much fudder has got for go?"

"How high up are you?" asked Legrand.

"Ebber so far," replied the negro, "can see de sky frum de top ob de tree."

"Never mind the sky, but attend to what I say. Look down the trunk and consider the limbs below you on this side. How many limbs have you passed?"

"One, two, three, four, five—I done pass five big limbs, massa, 'pon dis side."

"Then go one limb higher."

In a few minutes the voice was heard again, announcing that the seventh limb was attained.

"Now, Jup," cried Legrand, evidently much excited, "I want you to work your way out upon that limb as far as you can. If you see anything strange let me know."

By this time what little doubt I might have entertained of my poor friend's insanity was put finally at rest. I had no alternative but to conclude him stricken with lunacy, and I became seriously anxious about getting him home. While I was pondering on what was best to be done, Jupiter's voice was again heard.

"Mos' feared for to ventur 'pon dis limb berry far—'tis dead limb putty much ob de way."

"Did you say it was a dead limb, Jupiter?" cried Legrand in a quivering voice.

"Yes, massa, him dead as de door nail—done up for sartain—done departed dis here life."

"What in the name of heaven shall I do?" asked Legrand, seemingly in the greatest distress.

"Dol!" said I, glad of an opportunity to interpose a word, "why, come home and go to bed. Do—that's a fine fellow—its getting late, and besides you remember your promise."

"Jupiter," cried he, without heeding me in the least, "do you hear me?"

"Yes, Massa Will, hear you ebber so plain."

"Try the wood well then with your knife and see if you think it very rotten."

"Him rotten, massa, sure nuff," replied the negro in a few moments, "but not so berry rotten as might be. Mought ventur o' t leetle way 'pon de limb myself, dat's true."

"By yourself—what do you mean?"

"Why, I mean de bug. 'Tis berry hebbly bug. Spose I drop him down fust, and den de limb won't break wid just de weight ob one nigger?"

"You infernal scoundrel!" cried Legrand, apparently much relieved, "what do you mean by telling me such nonsense as that? As sure as you drop that beetle I'll break your neck. Look here, Jupiter, do you hear me?"

"Yes, massa, needn't holler at poor nigger in dat style."

"Well! now listen! if you will venture out on the limb as far as you think safe, and not let go of the beetle, I'll make you a present of a silver dollar as soon as you get down."

"I'm gwine, Massa Will—deed I is," replied the negro very promptly; "mos' out to de end now."

"Out to the end!" here fairly screamed Legrand, "do you say that you are out to the end of that limb?"

"Soon be to de end, massa—o-o-o-o!"

"Lor-gol-a-marey! what is dis here 'pon de tree?"

"Well!" cried Legrand, highly delighted, "why, taint noffin but a skull—somebody bin lef him head up de tree, and de crows done gobble ebbery bit ob de meat off."

"A skull, you say!—very well—how is it fastened to the limb?—what holds it on?"

"Sure nuff, massa; mus' look. Why, dis berry enous circumstance, 'pon my word—dare's a great big nail in de skull, what fastens ob it on to de tree."

"Well now, Jupiter, do exactly as I tell you—do you hear?"

"Yes, massa."

"Pay attention, then!—find the left eye of the skull."

"Him! hoo! dat's good! why, dare aint no eye lef at all."

"Curse your stupidity! do you know your right hand from your left?"

"Yes, I knows dat—knows all 'bout dat—'tis my lef hand what I chops de wood wid."

"To be sure! you are left handed; and your left eye is on the same side as your left hand. Now, I suppose you can find the left eye of the skull, or the place where the left eye has been. Have you found it?"

"Hans was a long pinner. At length the negro asked:

"Is de lef eye of de skull 'pon de same side as de lef hand of de skull, too?—cause de skull aint got no bit ob a hand at all—nebbur mind! I got de lef eye now—here de lef eye! what mus' do wid it?"

"Let the beetle drop through it as far as the string will reach, but be careful and not let go your hold of the string!"

"All dat done, Massa Will; mighty easy ting for to put de bug frum de hole—look out for him dar below!"

"Very well—now just keep as you are for a few minutes."

During this colloquy no portion of Jupiter's person could be seen; but the beetle, which he had suffered to descend, was now visible at the end of the string, and glistened like a globe of burnished gold, in the last rays of the setting sun, some of which still faintly illumined the eminence upon which we stood.

The *scarabeus* hung quite clear of any branches, and, if allowed to fall, would have fallen at our feet. Legrand immediately took the scythe, and cleared with it a circular space, three or four yards in diameter, just beneath the insect, and having accomplished this, ordered Jupiter to let go the string and come down from the tree.

Driving a peg, with great nicety, into the ground, at the precise spot where the beetle lay, my friend now produced from his pocket a tape measure. Fastening one end of this at that point of the trunk of the tree which was nearest the peg, he unrolled it till it reached the peg, and thence further unrolled it, in the direction already established by the two points of the tree and the peg, for the distance of fifty feet—Jupiter clearing away the brambles with the scythe. At the spot thus attained a second peg was driven, and about this, as a centre, a rude circle, about four feet in diameter, described. Taking now a spade himself, and giving one to Jupiter and one to me, Legrand begged us to set about digging as quickly as possible. To speak the truth, I had no especial relish for such amusement at any time, and at that particular moment I would most willingly have declined it, for the night was coming on, and I felt much fatigued with the exercise already taken; but I saw no mode of escape, and was fearful of disturbing my poor friend's equanimity by a refusal. Could I have depended, indeed, upon Jupiter's aid, I

would have had no hesitation in attempting to get the insect home by force; but I was too well assured of the old negro's disposition, to hope that he would assist me, under any circumstances, in a personal contest with his master. I made no doubt that the latter had been infected with some of the innumerable Southern superstitions about money buried, and that his phantasy had received confirmation by the finding of the *scarabeus*, or, perhaps, by Jupiter's obstinacy in maintaining it to be "a bug of real gold." A mind disposed to lunacy would readily be led away by such suggestions—especially if chiming in with favorite preconceived ideas—and then I called to mind the poor fellow's speech about the beetle's being "the index of his fortune." Upon the whole, I was sadly vexed and pained, but at length, I concluded to make a virtue of necessity—to dig with a good will, and thus the sooner to convince him, by ocular demonstration, of the fallacy of the opinions he entertained.

The lanterns having been lit, we all fell to work with a zeal worthy a more rational cause, and as the glare fell upon our persons and implements, I could not help thinking how picturesque a group we composed, and how strange and suspicious our labors must have appeared to any interloper who, by chance, might have stumbled upon our whereabouts.

We dug very steadily for two hours. Little was said; and our chief entertainment lay in the yelping of the dog, who took exceeding interest in our proceedings. He at length became so obstreperous that we grew fearful of his giving the alarm to some stragglers in the vicinity; or rather, this was the apprehension of Legrand, for myself, I should have rejoiced at any interruption which might have enabled me to get the wanderer home. The noise was at length, very effectually silenced by Jupiter, who, getting out of the hole with a dogged air of determination tied the brute's mouth up with one of his suspenders, and then returned, with a grave chuckle, to his task.

When the time mentioned had expired, we had reached a depth of five feet, and yet no signs of any treasure became manifest. A general pause ensued, and I began to hope that the farce was at an end. Legrand, however, although evidently much disconcerted, wiped his brows thoughtfully and then recommenced. We had excavated the entire circle of four feet diameter, and now we slightly enlarged the limit, and went to the farther depth of two feet. Still nothing appeared. The gold-seeker, whom I sincerely pitied, at length clambered from the pit, with the bitterest disappointment imprinted upon every feature, and proceeded, slowly and reluctantly, to put on his coat, which he had thrown off at the beginning of his labor. In the meantime I made no remark. Jupiter, at a signal from his master, began to gather up his tools. This done, and the dog having been unmuzzled, we turned in a profound silence toward home.

We had taken, perhaps, a dozen steps in this direction, when, with a loud oath, Legrand strode up to Jupiter and seized him by the collar. The astonished negro opened his eyes and mouth to the fullest extent, let fall the spades and fell upon his knees.

"You scoundrel," said Legrand, blinding out the syllables from between his clenched teeth; "you infernal black villain! speak! I tell you answer me this instant without prevarication! which— which is your left eye?"

"Oh, my Golly, Massa Will! aint dis here my left eye for sartain?" roared the terrified Jupiter, placing his hand upon his right organ of vision, and holding it there with a desperate pertinacity, as if in immediate dread of his master's attempt at a gagging.

"I thought so!—I know it!—hurry!" vociferated Legrand, letting the negro go, and executing a series of convulsed and erratic much to the astonishment of his valet, who, arising from his knees, looked vainly from his master to myself, and then from myself to his master.

"Come! we must go back," said the latter, the game's not up yet; and he again led the way to the tulip-tree.

"Jupiter," said he, when we reached its foot, "come here! was the skull nailed to the limb with the face outward, or with the face to the limb?"

"De face was out, massa, so dat de crows could get at de eyes good, widout any trouble."

"Well, then, was it this eye or that through which you dropped the beetle?" Here Legrand touched each of Jupiter's eyes.

"Twas dis eye, massa—de lef eye—'tis as you tell me; and here it was the right eye that de negro indicated."

"That will do—we must try it again."

Here my friend, about whose madness I now saw, or fancied that I saw, certain indications of method, removed the peg nearest the tree to a spot about three inches to the westward of its former position. Taking now the tape-measure from the nearest point of the trunk, as before, and continuing the extension in a straight line to the distance of fifty feet, a spot was indicated, removed by several yards from the point at which we had been digging.

[CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK]

SENTIMENT AND FACT.—A young lady who wore spectacles, exclaimed in a voice of sentimental enthusiasm, to a ploughman, who was walking on the road:—"Do you, sir, appreciate the beauty of that landscape? Oh, see those darling sheep and lambs skipping about!"

"Them aint sheep and lambs—them's dogs, Miss."